

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 L-02

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R 140855Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 638

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

:AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 4281

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 2035

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, RP

SUBJECT: NATIONAL REFERENDUM: LABOR GETS INTO THE ACT

BEGIN SUMMARY: WITH MEETING OF TOP TRADE UNION LEADERS
FEBRUARY 14, LABOR MOVEMENT HAS NOW GOTTEN INTO NATIONAL
REFERENDUM ACT. MANIFESTO URGING VIGOROUS PARTICIPATION
AND OVERWHELMING VOTE OF CONFIDENCE WAS AGREED UPON.
MASS LABOR RALLY ALSO PROPOSED FOR FEBRUARY 12. APPEARS
QUITE OBVIOUS LABOR SECRETARY OPLE GOT MARCHING ORDERS
TO GET ORGANIZED LABOR ON REFERENDUM BANDWAGON. EMBASSY
WOULD AGREE THAT DESPITE GROWING DISSATISFACTION WITH
SHRINKING REAL WAGES, LARGE MAJORITY WORKERS WILLING PLAY
ALONG WITH MARCOS' MARTIAL LAW REGIME. END SUMMARY.

1. LABOR MOVEMENT HAS NOW GOTTEN INTO NATIONAL REFERENDUM
ACT AS REPRESENTATIVES PRINCIPAL TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS
MET MORNING FEBRUARY 14 TO DRAFT MANIFESTO ON COMING VOTE.
ALTHOUGH FINAL DRAFT REMAINS TO BE POLISHED UP, EMBASSY
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INFORMED CONCLUSION ROUGHLY AS FOLLOWS: FILIPINO WORKERS

AND TILLERS (READ FARMERS), THROUGH THEIR UNIONS, CALLED UPON 1) TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY AND VIGOROUSLY IN FEB. 27 NATIONAL REFERENDUM, AND 2) TO GIVE NEW SOCIETY UNDER LEADERSHIP PRESIDENT MARCOS AN OVERWHELMING VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN INTEREST OF CONTINUING SOCIAL REFORMS, NATIONAL UNITY, AND NATIONAL SURVIVAL.

2. ROBERTO OCA (PRESIDENT TUCP AND PTGWO), WHO ATTENDED LABOR MEETING, TOLD LABATT HE HOPES PRESENT MANIFESTO TO MARCOS MORNING FEB. 17 DURING COURSE FARMER RALLY AT CAMP OLIVAS, SAN FERNANDO, PAMPANGA. HE ALSO REVEALED ORGANIZED LABOR PLANS MANILA REFERENDUM RALLY SOME 10,000 WORKERS FEB 21 AT FOLK ARTS THEATER, TO WHICH MARCOS, MAYOR OF MANILA, AND SECRETARIES OPLE, ESTRELLA AND RONO WOULD BE INVITED. (NOTE: THIS SAME DATE AS RUMORED REFERENDUM PROTEST RALLY/MARCH SPONSORED BY CHURCH'S MINORITY WING ACTIVISTS-- SE MANILA 1499.) OCA, WHO AMONG LABOR LEADERS IS PROBABLY CLOSEST TO MARCOS, EXPRESSED OPINION VAST MAJORITY WORKERS SUPPORTED MARTIAL LAW REGIME DESPITE CERTAIN RESENTMENT OVER CURTAILMENT SOME BASIC FREEDOMS.

3. CECILIO SENO (ALU EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT CURRENTLY ON LOAN TO NEW NLRC) NOTED THAT ONCE AGAIN IT WAS LABOR SECRETARY BLAS OPLE WHO HAD TO ACT AS CATALYST FOR JOINT MEETING TRADE UNION LEADERS. IT WAS OPLE WHO HAD ARRANGED GET-TOGETHER. SENO NOTED LABOR MOVEMENT HAS BEEN PRE-OCCUPIED WITH RESTRUCTURING ALMOST TO EXCLUSION EVERYTHING ELSE LATELY, THUS LACK OF ACTION ON REFERENDUM FRONT. MONST NATIONAL INTEREST ISSUES WERE DISCUSSED AT BARANGAY AND LOCAL OFFICIALS LEVEL, AND LABOR JUST HASN'T GOTTEN INVOLVED. IT ABOUT TIME, HE ASSERTED, THAT LABOR SPOKE UP. HE ALSO BELIEVED LARGE MAJORITY WORKERS WILLING CONTINUE GIVING MARTIAL LAW REGIME A CHANCE UNTIL IT FOUND TO BE NOT WORKABLE. THOUGHT IT TOO EARLY YET SAY WHETHER MARTIAL LAW SUCCESS OR FAILURE AS FAR AS LABOR CONCERNED.

4. OPLE GOT BALL ROLLING FEB. 13 WHEN HE ASKED COUNTRY'S WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS TO GIVE MARCOS "RESOUNDING VOTE OF CONFIDENCE" FEB. 27. PRESS FEB. 14 FRONT -PAGED OPLE'S ADDRESS TO PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION DURING WHICH CONFIDENTIAL

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HE ASSERTED VOTE OF CONFIDENCE WOULD SHOW THEIR OVERWHELMING SUPPORT OF INNOVATIONS USHERED IN BY LABOR CODE AS WELL AS AGRARIAN REFORM PROGRAM. ON BROADER PERSPECTIVE, HE DECLARED ISSUE IN REFERENDUM WAS WHETHER NATION WOULD SUSTAIN MOMENTUM OF NEW SOCIETY'S ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL REFORM PROGRAM OR LET IT LAPSE.

5. COMMENT: APPEARS QUITE OBVIOUS OPLE GOT MARCHING

ORDERS TO GET ORGANIZED LABOR ON REFERENDUM BANDWAGON
WITHOUT DELAY. MEETING-- QUITE IN KEEPING WITH ST. VALENTINE'S
DAY-- APPARANTLY WAS ALL HEARTS AND FLOWERS,
WITH OPLE GETTING MANIFESTO GOP WANTED. PUBLIC WILL NOT
LIKELY BE PRIVY TO FACT IT TOOK LABOR SECRETARY TO PROD
LABOR MOVEMENT INTO ISSUEING JOINT REFERENDUM STATEMENT.
HOWEVER, INFORMED POLITICAL OBSERVERS WILL HAVE NOTED
THIS EXERCISE AS ONE FURTHER EXAMPLE OF LABOR'S INABILITY
ACT FORCEFULLY OR EVEN INDEPENDLY ON NATIONAL ISSUES
AS LONG AS IT REMAINS FRAGMENTED. EMBASSY WOULD AGREE
THAT DESPITE GROWING DISSATISFACTION WITHSHRINKING REAL
WAGES, LARGE MAJORITY WORKERS STILL WILLING PLAY ALONG
WITH MARCOS' MARTIAL LAW REGIME. GOVERNMENT PROBABLY
SEEKING PROMOTE MASS MOVEMENT SUPPORT BY LABOR AS ONE
MEANS TO BLUNT REFERENDUM BOYCOTT MOVE BY CHURCH MINORITY
WING ACTIVISTS. SULLIVAN

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